

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 14, 2010

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

We are writing to enthusiastically endorse Massachusetts' Phase I application for the Race to the Top Fund.

As you know, Massachusetts is a national leader in education reform and improvement, and our students consistently rank among the highest performers on U.S. and international measures of reading, mathematics and science achievement. Still, we recognize the need to continue working to close persistent achievement gaps and ensure that each and every one of our students receives a world-class public education. Massachusetts' Race to the Top application aims to accomplish this goal by building on the strong foundation of our landmark 1993 Education Reform Act and launching a second phase of major education reforms designed to propel student achievement to new heights.

Massachusetts' application emphasizes four ambitious yet achievable goals: providing all students with a more personalized educational experience; developing and retaining an effective, diverse, and culturally competent educator workforce; concentrating high-quality instruction, additional supports for students and families, and tools for educators in the lowest-performing schools; and increasing the readiness of all students for college and careers.

The application also articulates a series of bold and innovative strategies to reach each of the above goals. For example, Massachusetts plans to establish a new teaching and learning system that will give educators unprecedented access to formative, benchmark, and interim assessments that are closely aligned to rigorous content standards. Our application will promote the establishment of a greatly enhanced student data system that will allow educators to run sophisticated, real-time reports assessing students' academic mastery and continued learning needs.

We hope to use Race to the Top funding to establish a new teacher licensure system to ensure that teachers are expertly qualified in different domains, as well as a teacher career ladder that will encourage educators to move into new leadership roles. Finally, we will use program funding to implement dramatic new turnaround strategies authorized by the state legislation, which you joined us in promoting last July. Taken together, we believe these initiatives will not

only be a powerful impetus for dramatic change in Massachusetts, but also allow our state to continue to serve as a national model for educational improvement and reform.


We appreciate the leadership that you and President Obama have shown to make this unprecedented opportunity available to states and respectfully request that you will give Massachusetts' application the fullest consideration.


Sincerely,


Edward J. Markey
U.S. Representative


John F. Kerry
U.S. Senator



Barney Frank
U.S. Representative



Paul G. Kirk
U.S. Senator

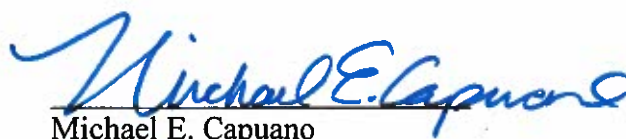

Richard E. Neal
U.S. Representative

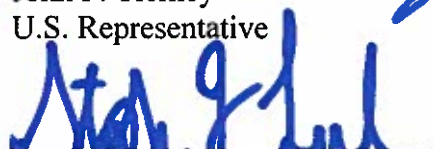

John W. Olver
U.S. Representative


Bill Delahunt
U.S. Representative


Jim P. McGovern
U.S. Representative


John F. Tierney
U.S. Representative


Michael E. Capuano
U.S. Representative


Stephen F. Lynch
U.S. Representative


Niki Tsongas
U.S. Representative